

One Adolescent's Construction of Native Identity in School: "Speaking with Dance and Not in Words and Writing"

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This case study describes how one eighth-grade student, Jon, asserted Native identities in texts as he attended a middle school in the western United States. Jon—a self-described Native American, Navajo, and Paiute with verified Native ancestry—sought to share what he called his Native culture with others in his school wherein he was the only Native American, despite his perception that schools have historically suppressed this culture. To study how the texts that Jon designed in school may have afforded and constrained the expression of Native identities, the authors collected three types of data over the course of eight months: (a) interviews from Jon and his teachers; (b) fieldnotes from classroom observations; and (c) texts that Jon designed in school. Grounded in theories of social semiotics and multimodality, the findings from this study suggest that different forms of representation afforded and constrained the expression of Jon's desired identities in different ways due to their different physical properties, due to their historical and immediate uses in context, and due to the extent to which they fulfilled different metafunctions of communication. Recognizing the tensions and ironies associated with using some forms of representation, Jon sought to combine and use multiple representations to construct desired identities and to negate undesired ones.

Our dances were a sign to keep the Idian within us. Cause back then white men wanted to "americanize" the Native Americans. They wanted all native children to get sent out to boarding school to learn the white men customs. And many changed their ways of life to the white mans ways and discriminated the ones who still spoke their native language and stayed with their native cultures also.¹

—Jon (student-selected pseudonym), *Autobiography*

Schools are often sites wherein students construct identities in relation to the texts they encounter and create (McCarthy, 2009; Rex, 2001), including texts such as written words, images, spoken words, postures, room arrangement, music, clothes, and more (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Students' relations to school-sanctioned

texts may be characterized by degrees of resistance (Eckert, 1989; Martino, 2000) as students strategically refuse, accept, and adapt the norms therein (Gilbert, 2006). For students whose values and social practices at home do not align with those found in their schools, the tensions involved in valuing, countering, and/or using different texts promoted in schools may be especially challenging (Gee, 2008). For several centuries throughout the history of the United States, Native youths' interactions with school-mandated texts have been a prominent example of this challenge as an "army of Christian schoolteachers" sought to eradicate Native identities through disallowing the postures, languages, clothes, and hairstyles that the children used at home (Adams, 1995, p. 27; cf. Child, 1999; Ellis, 1996). Many Native youths learned to simultaneously reject and use components of Eurocentric schooling in individual and complex ways as they "turned the power" by using what they learned to benefit themselves and their communities (Trafzer, Keller, & Sisquoc, 2006).

Although many educational institutions have since become more responsive and respectful to Native children, issues surrounding the affirmation of Native identities are still pervasive and consequential (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Forbes, 2000), as the participant in this case study demonstrated throughout his eighth-grade year. Jon, a self-termed Navajo, Paiute, and Native American, often wrote of a history of assimilation, regretting that he had inherited a past characterized by "killings for no reason" where "Native Americans had to drop and leave there culture behind and act like white men.—to 'Americanize' them." Despite this tradition of attempted suppression of Native identities in schools, Jon used his school as a site wherein he asserted and affirmed Native identities. Through a close examination of Jon's texts in school, this study hopes to answer calls for more research about how literacy practices in schools can be more responsive to Native American students (Belgarde, LoRé, & Meyer, 2009) and about "how and why individuals . . . mak[e] choices about identity, culture, decolonization, or change" (Champagne, 2007, p. 362; cf. Cockrell, Piacentini, & McCloskey, 2008).

To answer *how* an individual made these choices, we took a particular angle: We associated the term *how* with *through what textual means*, and we studied the types of texts whereby Jon expressed that he was a Native American in his school setting. Specifically, we asked the following research questions:

1. What modes did one eighth-grade adolescent use to assert identities as a Native American, Navajo, and Paiute through texts in school?
2. What were the affordances and constraints of these modes?
3. What contradictions, if any, were present in the texts through which Jon had asserted Native identities, and how did Jon address these contradictions?

Given the complexities of textual forms that have been used to suppress and express Native identities, we hoped that an investigation into the modes that Jon used in school would help us to explain one aspect of how he maintained identities as a Native American, Paiute, and Navajo and how he navigated potential tensions while doing so.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of multimodality (e.g., Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) and social semiotics (Halliday, 1978; Hodge & Kress, 1988; van Leeuwen, 2005) informed our approach to this study. Theories of multimodality are concerned with the characteristics of different modes or combinations of modes and with their relative semiotic power in conveying particular types of meanings. *Modes* can be defined as socially-fashioned resources used in representation, such as images, music, grass dancing, written words, spoken words, and beadwork (Kress, 2003), which are often combined to form *texts*, or instances of communication in any combination of modes. A mode's semiotic power is shaped in part by its *affordances*, or the potential uses to which it lends itself given its physical properties and given the social, material, and historical contexts in which it is used (Gibson, 1979; Jewitt, 2006).

A social semiotics approach to multimodality (Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2001) emphasizes how multimodal texts are used and exchanged in social settings by text designers who enact or resist asymmetrical power relations (Hodge & Kress, 1988). Under theories of social semiotics, communication is governed by a series of logonomic systems, or sets of rules prescribing "who can claim to initiate or know meanings about what topics under what circumstances and with what modalities" (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 4). Schools, for instance, enforce logonomic systems regulating the clothes that people can wear, the types of texts that students can acceptably submit for assignments, and the postures that students are expected to assume, such as sitting in their seats during class.

People's texts may reinforce or challenge logonomic systems as they assert power and indicate affiliation with (or disaffiliation from) particular social groups. Just as texts *realize* a social group, in the sense of "not merely expressing it, but actively creating and maintaining it" (Halliday, 1978, p. 172), multimodal texts also realize individuals' identities as people assert or negate affiliation with these groups. These affiliations can be accomplished through the three metafunctions of communication (Halliday, 1973): the *ideational* or referential function, by which people refer to objects or phenomena and their experiences of them; the *interpersonal* function, by which people indicate social roles for themselves and others; and the *textual* function, by which a text becomes "operationally relevant" and a "living message" as parts of the text are related to each other and to the situation at hand (Halliday, 1978, p. 42).

As people communicate and express identities within social groups, the value of each sign that they use can be determined by noting how the sign differs from other signs as agreed upon by the group at a given point in time (Saussure, 1916/1986). In other words, each sign does not derive its value solely from being a signifier (e.g., boys' long hair) combined with a signified (e.g., the concept of being Native American) (Adams, 1995). In Saussure's words, "In a language there are only differences, *and no positive terms*. . . . In a sign, what matters more than any idea or sound associated with it is what other signs surround it" (1916/1986, p. 118; italics in original). Thus, within a given system of hairstyles in the late 1800s in the United States, the sign of men's long hair held a particular value only because of how it differed from other contemporary hairstyles. Each sign is therefore not only an assertion but also a repudiation of meaning, produced within systems of meaning wherein signs are related to each other by degrees of opposition and similarity.

Method

Context of the Study

This study was conducted in a middle school in the western United States in a suburban community wherein 96 percent of the population was White and three percent was Hispanic, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The average median income per family in this area was over \$65,000, or nearly \$19,000 above the average median household income throughout the state. Although Jon and his father enjoyed hunting together on nearby reservation lands, for much of his life, Jon had been raised in this or other comparable suburban neighborhoods.

Jon's school district required him to attend the following classes: health, physical education, American history, English/language arts, reading, basic algebra, physical science, and advisory, a class wherein students watched Channel One and read silently for 20 minutes. In addition, Jon chose to register for Woods 1 and Woods 2, classes in which students made furniture and other items out of wood.

Research Participant

A quote from Jon will serve as a way for him to introduce himself. When asked "what makes you *you*" as a writing prompt in one of his classes, Jon wrote:

Things that make me me is. . . . I am a native dancer. I feel like Dancing & Native pride is in me. And that I am a skill full hunter. Last year I shot my first deer on the tribal land. And I have been saving up my money so I can hunt All I want! I love to hunt & dance.

As this quote and other data indicate, an identity as a Native American was central to Jon's conceptions of himself. Jon's mother descended from two indigenous nations: the Navajo (Diné), who have historically lived in parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah (Linford, 2000); and the Southern Paiute, who have historically lived in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah (Knack, 2001). Jon's mother

explained that “I was never into my culture” as a child, and although she did not speak Native languages or maintain Native traditions as she was growing up, she supported her children in doing so. Accordingly, she took Jon to the library to check out books on how to speak, read, and write Navajo and Paiute; she brought him to powwows where he entered grass dancing competitions; and she took him to visit her mother, with whom he beaded roaches, a type of headdress, as part of his dancing regalia and with whom he made traditional Native foods. Jon and his mother both attributed Jon’s growing interest in what he termed his *Native culture* to these visits with his grandmother and extended family.

Jon described his European American father as “the English one in the family,” but he identified more closely with his mother as “the one who gave me my native culture,” including “dark skin and the dark hair. And my brown eyes. But I don’t look any thing like my dad.” Although Jon’s father was European American, Jon did not consider himself as such, instead identifying himself variously as Native American, Paiute, and/or Navajo. Jon’s teachers and friends at school, in contrast, were all White, to use Jon’s terminology.

Jon remarked to the first author that he had the darkest skin in his family—even darker than his mother’s—and consequently people sometimes did not believe that he was related to his two younger brothers whose skin was comparatively lighter. Many of the faculty at the school initially assumed he was Latino, and the principal spoke Spanish to him in the hallways until he requested, “English please.” In other ways, however, Jon’s appearance mirrored that of most of his peers at school: His usual attire was jeans and a T-shirt or baseball jersey, oftentimes with a cell phone in hand if class was not in session. He had short stylish hair and wore an earring during the first half of the school year. He occasionally wore wristbands to school, indicating that he had participated in a powwow over the weekend, and he lifted up his wrists to showcase the bands to his friends and to several of his teachers.

Jon sought other ways to share his self-termed Native culture in school as well. For instance, he created flyers announcing upcoming powwows in which he was dancing, distributed them to his teachers, and asked the principal to read them over the intercom. Moreover, he wrote about being Native American in many of his assignments. According to his advisory teacher,

Every Friday for the last two quarters, I asked students to write on a creative writing prompt . . . For example, I asked them to tell me something they’re passionate about. Tell me something you’re bugged about. Whatever Jon wrote about, he incorporated the fact that he was Native American. Like I say, every assignment was tied into his heritage. He’s pretty proud of that.

In all, Jon affirmed an identity as a Native American, Navajo, or Paiute across numerous texts in school, both in response to required assignments and at his own initiative.

Jon's teachers seemed to hold somewhat contradictory opinions of him. In one sense, they considered him as being easy to overlook. In the words of Jon's science teacher, he "can sometimes fall through the cracks." This statement was also affirmed by his history and advisory teachers, the latter of whom clarified that he often failed to notice Jon in his rowdy class because he was "the least of my worries." On the other hand, although some of Jon's teachers asserted he did not stand out in his classes, they nonetheless respected him as a "good student"—one who was affable, respectful, admired by his peers, and academically solid. As Jon's woods teacher said, "He's just a powerful leader. He doesn't say it; he just exemplifies it. Peers see it. They asked me to nominate him as Student of the Day because of all of his hard work." Jon's teachers also held contradictory conceptions of Jon in another way: some of his seventh-grade and eighth-grade teachers assumed he was Latino or simply "ethnic," despite his identification as a Native in assignments in their classes and despite the flyers he distributed announcing powwows. Other teachers, however, knew that Jon identified himself as a Native American.

Researcher Stance

We (the first and second authors) are both European American literacy researchers who have been secondary teachers in public school settings. The first author was also Jon's language arts and reading teacher at the time she collected the data for the study. She had been raised in a community that neighbored Jon's suburban city and that had comparable demographics. At the time of the study, she had taught at Jon's middle school for two years and had previously taught in similar secondary school settings for four years. The second author had taught English language learners for seven years in the southeastern United States prior to reading, discussing, and coding the data with the first author.

It does not escape our attention that there are paradoxes inherent in our position in the writing of this study. We discuss them in more depth in the limitations section, but we acknowledge here the ironies innate in writing a study about a Native American youth who resisted Eurocentric modes of communication while at the same time the first author was also his English teacher. In a special issue of *American Indian Quarterly* entitled "Writing about (Writing about) American Indians," Wilson (1996) questioned in the title of her article: "American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History?" We could easily ask of our study: "Native American Identity or Non-Indian Perceptions of Native American Identity?"

We answer by acknowledging that—although we actively sought to learn from and consult Jon, his family, and the writings and opinions of people who have identified themselves as Navajo, Paiute, or Native American—our perception is clearly a non-Indian perception. Because most teachers of indigenous children in American public schools are of European descent as we are (Zumwalt & Craig,

2005), we hope this study still offers a valuable vantage point from which to explicate our understandings of the first author's student and how her educational practices could have been more responsive. Ultimately, we hope that this study results in a commentary on how our own teaching could be made more supportive of the expression of Native identities in school.

Data Collection

For eight months during Jon's eighth-grade year, as an extension of previous research that had been conducted with Jon (Wilson, 2009), the first author collected data from three sources: assignments and artifacts; fieldnotes from observations; and interviews with Jon and his other teachers. Additionally, the first author spoke with Jon's mother several times throughout the course of the school year and attended Jon's powwows at his request. These latter conversations and out-of-school experiences were not officially analyzed, but they informed our understandings and our writing about the context of the study.

Assignments and Artifacts

To identify the modes that Jon used to design texts in school, we collected all of Jon's assignments from his language arts and reading classes, and Jon estimated that we collected approximately 90 percent of his assignments from other classes as well. According to Jon, the other ten percent was not collected because some teachers threw away some assignments rather than returning them, because he may have lost a few assignments prior to giving them to the researchers to be copied, or because he threw away assignments on which he earned "bad" grades that he did not want us to see. During the course of the study, Jon brought additional artifacts into school such as flyers and a DVD of powwow dances he had brought to show and explain to several of his classes. (In the last case, we purchased our own copy of the DVD.) We identified and analyzed these sources as instances when Jon realized an identity as a Native American in texts at school.

Fieldnotes from Observations

Throughout the school year, the first author kept a clipboard on which she took attendance and wrote other notes about her classroom instruction. When data collection for the study began, she used this clipboard to write brief fieldnotes about Jon during each language arts and reading period, noting Jon's comments, actions, and interactions, along with noting the general classroom activities that happened each day. During her preparation period or as soon as possible thereafter, she wrote expanded fieldnotes on these observations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). The first author also took fieldnotes when she visited Jon at least twice in each of his other subject areas. To protect his confidentiality, she attended other classes as well and told students that she was observing classrooms as a requirement for earning her graduate degree.

Interviews

The first author conducted fourteen 30-minute interviews with Jon at regular intervals throughout the duration of the study. These phenomenological interviews (deMarrais, 2004) were designed to provide Jon with opportunities to give open-ended answers regarding the texts he created. Jon's teachers provided the second source of interview data. At the beginning of the study, they agreed to pay attention to his actions and assignments throughout the school year. The first author spoke with them informally throughout the year to ask them about Jon, jotting notes as they were speaking and expanding them soon thereafter. Additionally, Jon's teachers participated in three 20-30 minute formal interviews, one at the end of each school quarter (see Appendix B for sample interview questions). The transcripts from all of the formal interviews were analyzed, along with the notes from the informal conversations.

Data Reduction

Data analysis began with initial readings and comparisons across data points. From a corpus of data of more than 1400 pages, 83 "telling cases" were selected from interview transcripts, fieldnotes, artifacts, and assignments for closer analysis (Rex, 2001). We selected these telling cases because they were identifiable examples of texts through which Jon realized an identity as a Native American. These data contained (a) in the case of writing or speech, first-person pronouns in which Jon explicitly affiliated himself with Native people and/or (b) themes and modes that Jon explicitly connected to being Native American in his interviews and writing, such as grass dancing, beadwork, dancing regalia, hunting, and powwow music. All texts that did not meet one or both of these criteria were excluded from our analysis.

As Deyhle (1995) noted, there are hundreds of different ways of being Navajo. By extension, there are countless ways to realize an identity as a Navajo, a Paiute, and a Native American. At the same time, the history of suppression of Native American identity in American schools suggests that not all school-sanctioned texts provide students with the same opportunities to display a Native identity (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Thus, although all of the texts that Jon created throughout the year may have realized identities that were related to his identities as a Native youth, these texts were excluded from our analysis because Jon did not associate the content or the modes therein with his perception of what it meant to be a Native American.

Data Analysis

The first and second authors worked together to analyze each of the 83 telling cases as they decided on the appropriateness of each individual code together (Smagorinsky, 2008). Moreover, a professor of literacy education who identified herself as Native American also served as an advisor to this research project by randomly auditing data points and initial codes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and then confirming that

written drafts of the study were credible to her. Upon the completion of this study, a nationally recognized expert on Native American identity, who was also a Native American professor, commented on the final draft.

For each data point in which Jon realized an identity as a Native American, we placed the text in one of two overarching categories: *teacher-mandated*, meaning an assignment required by the teacher, and *student-initiated*, meaning a text Jon brought to school or made in school of his own volition. From this division, we intended to detect any differences between the modes of texts that Jon preferred to make on his own as compared to those his teachers assigned. We hoped that these distinctions would help us to recognize tensions or constancies that may have been present as Jon realized Native identities.

After being placed in one of these two overarching categories, the data were then further divided into five additional subcategories: (a) *genre*, or a type of text whose structure indicates its use in a communicative event (van Leeuwen, 2005), including examples such as intercom announcements, flyers, historical narratives, and song lyrics; (b) *mode*, or organized sets of semiotic resources used for making meaning (Jewitt, 2008), including examples such as photographs, dance, written words, and moving images; (c) *intended audience*, or people to whom Jon intended to communicate, including examples such as friends, the whole student body of the middle school, a teacher, or classmates; (d) *materials used*, or the audible, visible, or tangible mediums through which Jon created texts, such as paper and pencil; and (e) *referenced modes*, or other modes to which Jon referred as he wrote or spoke, including examples such as food, dance, woodwork, and music. Under this final category, we noted whether Jon indicated an affinity (+) or an aversion (-) toward the referenced mode. In instances when we could not discern Jon's affective orientation toward the mode, we coded it as (n) for not discernable.

These categories allowed us to see several patterns in relation to our research questions. First, they allowed us to record the modes through which Jon realized Native identities. As we read through the data and discussed potential contradictions and relationships across the modes that Jon used, we noted how he used the ideational function of written and spoken words—the modes most commonly required of him at school—to refer to other modes for which he felt a stronger affinity. This code of *referenced modes* allowed us to analyze one way that Jon addressed the constraints placed upon him in a print-centric setting. By coding the *material resources* used in each mode, we hoped to respond to Jewitt's (2006, 2008) contention that affordances are in part shaped by a mode's material and physical properties. By noting the *audience* to whom Jon was communicating, we hoped to investigate how Jon may have used particular modes because they fulfilled the textual function of communication through being coherent and consistent with the expectations of the people toward whom texts were directed. Finally, as we read through the data, we noticed that Jon wrote and spoke much more enthusiastically

about some modes than others, and we coded Jon's affective orientation toward different modes in the belief that these codes might also reveal contradictions and connections between the modes he actually used and the modes he enjoyed using to realize Native identities.

An example (see Figure 1) will illustrate how we coded the data. In his reading class, Jon was required to make a brochure advertising a real or imagined holiday. Jon's brochure was entitled INDIAN NATIONS DAY and was categorized as a *teacher-mandated* text. We coded this text as the following: (a) *genre*: brochure; (b) *modes*: image (the sketch of the eagle) and printed words in English; (c) *intended audience*: teacher; (d) *referenced modes*: pottery (+), face painting (+), food (+), dance (+), image (+), and music (+). We coded Jon's affective orientation toward each of these modes with a positive sign because Jon invited his readers to "enjoy many Activitys, Entertainment, and much, much more." Furthermore, the genre of the brochure indicated that the events listed therein were supposed to be seen as desirable or pleasurable, which also contributed to our decision to assign a positive sign indicating Jon's affective orientation toward each of those modes. Finally, we did not code "fancy shawl" as "clothes" in this category because in this instance it referred to the name of a dance.

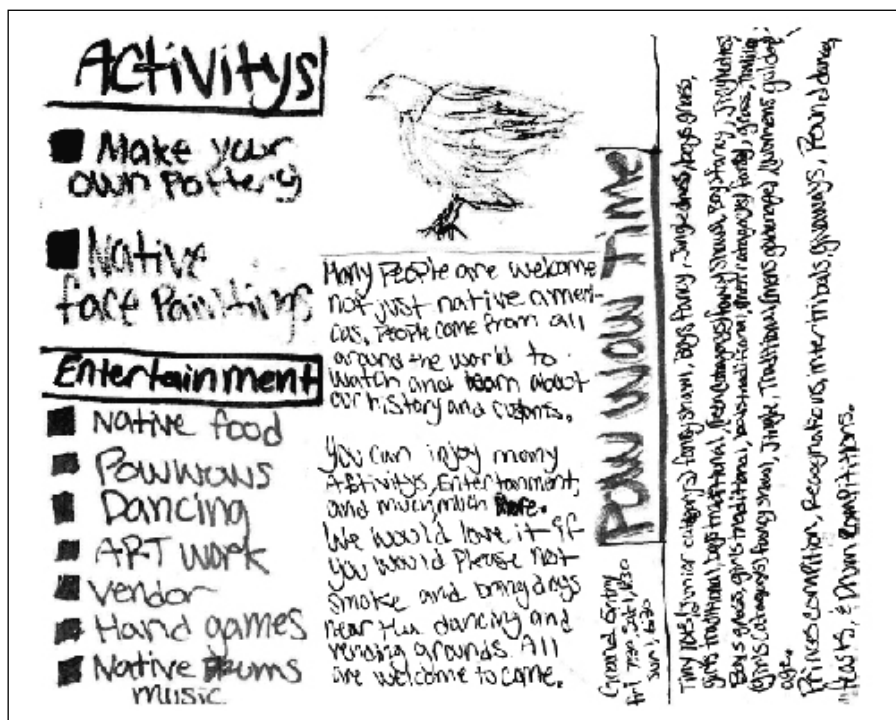


FIGURE 1. *One side of Jon's flyer entitled INDIAN NATIONS DAY.*

As a final note to our coding system, we coded for *genre* primarily because this category helped to orient our thinking about the purpose, structure, and audience of the texts we analyzed. This category assisted us in making decisions about the other codes, as in the above example when the genre of the brochure helped us to infer that Jon felt an affinity toward the items listed within that type of text. Because this code was primarily a tool that served to orient our thinking about the other codes, we did not report all of the genres that we identified.

Limitations

In response to a long history of “research” that has disparaged indigenous peoples (Deloria, 1969), many Native scholars (e.g., Champagne, 1996; Morrison, 1997) have warned against studies that harm or essentialize Native Americans or studies that dismiss Native perspectives while establishing the researchers’ cultural perspectives. To address these concerns, we spoke with Native scholars about our research and consulted with Jon’s mother throughout the course of the year regarding our emerging interpretations. Moreover, we conducted member checks with Jon, which concluded with our sharing basic tenets of the article with him and asking him if he felt comfortable with our interpretations.

Despite our efforts to consult and read works by Native scholars, we acknowledge our perspective as European American teachers and researchers. This perspective is evident in several ways. Unlike many Native scholars (e.g., Browder, 1997; Garouette, 2003) who assert that blood quantum or tribal endorsement is often essential to Native identity, we instead describe the establishment of Jon’s Native identity in terms of the texts he designed. We clarify here that Jon descended from Navajo and Paiute ancestors, and that he was officially initiated as a Paiute soon after the completion of this study. Given this background, we were interested in how Jon expressed these verified Native identities as he designed texts in school. Our study further represents a non-Indian perspective because it is not grounded in Native epistemologies, including respectful relations with animate powers (Champagne, 2007). Despite this limitation, we draw the rationale for this study from Champagne (1996, 2007), who asserted that “there is room for both Indian and non-Indian scholars” who are concerned with the experiences of Native youths in schools (1996, p. 77), and that “there are many ways to interpret the world, and if researchers are generating theory and empirical knowledge that is made accessible to American Indian nations and constructive publics, then they are fulfilling their role as researchers” (2007, p. 355).

In writing of the dangers of non-Indian researchers conducting research on Indian populations, Mihesuah (1998) warned against essentializing people as Native Americans without noting the characteristics of individual nations and people. To avoid essentializing Jon as a Native American, we clarify here that Jon saw himself not just as a Native American, Paiute, and a Navajo. In member checks

and interviews, he also highlighted identities as an award-winning BMX bike racer, a good older brother, a baseball player, a grandson, and a friend. His teachers knew him as a hard worker and an eighth-grader who could make friends easily. His mother emphasized that he was an entrepreneur and a bright, creative person. As Weaver (2001) noted, people often identify themselves in many ways other than by their cultures, and these identities "are always fragmented, multiply constructed, and intersected in a constantly changing, sometimes conflicting array" with their cultural identities (p. 240). Although acknowledging that an individual's identities are multiple, Weaver nonetheless asserted that *cultural identity*, "as reflected in the values, beliefs, and worldviews of indigenous people" (p. 240), is worthy of study in and of itself, especially in light of historical attempts to eradicate Native cultures. It is under this belief that we exclusively focus our study on texts in which Jon asserted an identity as a Navajo, a Paiute, or a Native American.

An additional limitation to our methodology was the way in which we reduced our data. We did not ask Jon to cull the original 1400-page data set by selecting the texts that he perceived related to Native identities. Instead, we selected the telling cases that we perceived were related to his Native identities, based upon our understandings of Jon's assignments, interviews, and member checks. We hoped that the ongoing interviews with Jon, in which he defined what he called his *culture*, would help us to maintain a degree of fidelity with Jon's perceptions of his *cultural identity* (Mihesuah, 1998). Nonetheless, we may have included or excluded texts from our analysis that would differ from the texts that Jon would have selected if he had reduced the data himself.

Findings

Findings from the study include (a) the modes that Jon used, (b) the affordances and constraints of these modes, and (c) the contradictions that were present in the texts through which Jon had realized Native identities. We present our findings in three separate sections, each of which responds to one of the three original research questions.

Modes Used

Tables 1 and 2 indicate that Jon used written words in English as the primary mode of communication in 95% of the texts assigned by his teachers. These teacher-mandated, print-based assignments included genres such as journal entries, stories, an autobiography, lists, paragraphs, and other texts whose expected form of response was primarily linguistic. To a lesser extent, some assignments, such as posters and brochures, also assumed the use of images.

In contrast to these print-oriented texts required by teachers, Jon used a wide variety of semiotic resources in student-initiated texts, such as when he danced to his favorite Native music in full regalia in front of the whole school for the talent

TABLE 1. Analysis of Student-Initiated Texts in which Jon Realized Native Identities (n = 25)

Modes	Referenced Modes	Intended Audience	Materials Used
written words in English (13)	dancing (15+)	teacher (11)	paper (13)
images (6)	music (9+)	himself (7)	pencil/pen (5)
music (5)	clothes/regalia (7+, 1n)	class (4)	vocal chords (4)
spoken words in English (4)	images (5+)	student body (4)	computer (3)
clothes/regalia (3)	written words in English (2+, 2-)	several classes (4)	marker (3)
dancing (2)	food (3+)	friends (3)	music CD (3)
moving images (2)	beadwork (2+)	city (1)	printing ink (3)
woodwork (1)	spoken words in English (1+, 1n)	grandmother (1)	beads (2)
written words in Navajo (1)	architecture (1n)		CD player (2)
written words in Paiute (1)	crafts (1+)		DVD player (2)
	land/nature (1+)		string (2)
	written words in Navajo (1+)		television (2)
	written words in Paiute (1+)		whole body movements (2)
			camera (1)
			chisel (1)
			crayons (1)
			feathers (1)
			plastic band (1)
			whiteboard (1)
			wood (1)

show. He also requested that the first author share a compact disc of intertribal music, on which he had written *Tha TRIBE MAD hops & crazy stops*, with her classes. Additionally, he asked her if he could explain videos of Native dancing to several different language arts classes, and he shared photographs of deer he had shot on tribal lands with his friends and teachers.

Although the modes used in student-initiated texts were more diverse than the modes used in teacher-mandated texts, Jon still used written words in 52% of student-initiated texts as the most common mode of communication. Nonetheless, this preponderance of written words did not necessarily indicate that Jon unequivocally preferred writing as a means for communication. A closer look at

TABLE 2. Analysis of Teacher-Mandated Texts in which Jon Realized Native Identities (n = 58)

Modes	Referenced Modes	Intended Audience	Materials Used
written words in English (55)	land/nature (45+)	teacher (57)	paper (58)
images (10)	dancing (22+)	class (8)	pencil/pen (55)
spoken words in English (5)	music (7+)	friends (5)	computer (6)
written words in Navajo (1)	food (7+)	judges at fair (1)	markers (4)
written words in Paiute (1)	clothes/regalia (6+)	small group (1)	vocal chords (4)
	images (4+)		crayons (3)
	spoken words in Navajo (4+)		camera (1)
	spoken words in English (1n, 2-)		glue (1)
	written words in English (3-)		magazine (1)
	beadwork (2+)		scissors (1)
	spoken words in Paiute (2+)		
	woodwork (2+)		
	face painting (1+)		
	pottery (1+)		

the genres of Jon's student-initiated texts suggests that words were often used with the primary intent of referring readers to other modes. For instance, Jon created flyers whose purpose was to invite people to attend powwows, and he wrote labels for CDs of Native music. He referred his readers to the presence of music by writing lyrics for his friends' band, using words that indicated he was trying to "find out who I am" as "the only one left on my family tree." Jon also wrote the addresses of websites on a whiteboard that referred his classmates to sites dominated by Native American art, such as <http://www.gatheringofnations.com/>. This site included a variety of multimodal resources, including "Native Ringtones," "Native American E-cards," and "Over 13,000 Native American Indian Photos and Pictures." As these examples indicate, although Jon did use written words in self-initiated texts, the genres he wrote were usually shorter than the written genres assigned by teachers, they often accompanied other modes, and Jon's intention was often to refer people to other multimodal texts.

Affordances and Constraints of Modes Used

In all, the data suggest that, although Jon primarily used written words in English to realize Native identities, he also designed texts in a variety of other modes: music,

dancing, clothes and regalia, spoken words, woodwork, beadwork, images, and various combinations of these. Due to a limited amount of data in some of these modes, we are not confident that we have the evidence to warrant conclusions about what each of these modes afforded Jon or how they may have constrained him in realizing Native identities. Nevertheless, the data we have are suggestive regarding two modes in particular: written words and dancing. We therefore turned to these two modes to answer our second research question, *What were the affordances and constraints of the modes used by Jon?*

A few of Jon's written texts served as the starting point for how we began to think about this question. In his life mission statement, which Jon had entitled "A Native Within" and illustrated with a powwow drum and feather, Jon wrote that two of his goals in life were to "Dance until I can dance no more," and to "Speak with dance and not in words and writing." This desire to "speak with dance" was echoed in his autobiography, in which Jon described boarding schools where Natives were required to learn the "white men customs" that tried to supplant "native language[s]." Jon asserted that, in the face of this attempt at assimilation, "our dances were a sign to keep the Indian with in us."

Jon's 13-page narrative, "A NATIVE STORY," was another source in which Jon expressed an aversion toward written words and an affinity for dancing. After describing a "tragic" history of several broken treaties that "makes my heart sick," Jon wrote:

With their hunting grounds disappearing, some tribes turned in despair to a Paiute prophet named Wovoka. He seen a vision were a new age was started and which whites would be removed and Natives could walk and hunt freely. To prepair for this time, Wovoka urged native Americans to preform the chants and dance of the Ghost Dance. Wovoka's hopeful vision quickly spread among many Plains Indian tribes.

Given these data, we chose to conceptualize affordances, not solely in terms of the perceivable material properties that "continue to exist objectively, latent in the object" or mode (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 253), but also in terms of what the mode had been repeatedly used to mean and do (Jewitt, 2006). Though the objective properties of written words may afford the expression of the world using a temporal logic (Kress, 2003), to Jon, a significant characteristic of written words was that they had been used in treaties to rob his ancestors of land and to supplant Native oral languages (cf. White-Kaulaity, 2007). Likewise, although dance may have objective affordances based on its physical properties, its significance to Jon resided in its historical uses to affirm a Native identity and to promote hope and renewal in the face of destruction and loss (cf. Ellis, 2003).

Under the recognition that we needed to consider the historical uses of modes to understand their affordances and constraints, we tried to account for interrelationships among the material, social, cultural, and historical aspects of the two

modes as we related Jon's texts to the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions of communication (Halliday, 1978). We also described each mode's affordances and constraints by considering how given signs may have enabled Jon to assert and negate meanings within larger systems of differences (Saussure, 1916/1986).

The Affordances and Constraints of Written Words in English

In terms of their physical properties, written words afforded Jon the opportunity to fulfill the ideational function of communication with minimal physical exertion and with few material resources. Out of the collected data, all but three of Jon's writings were produced by hand and required only paper and pencil or pen, relatively inexpensive semiotic resources available in any of his classrooms. Furthermore, in writing, the physical effort and time required to refer to an object—such as a mallet used to beat the drums at a powwow, for instance—were minimal compared to the physical effort required for Jon to craft such a mallet in woods class. This latter mode also required relatively expensive material resources for its construction: wood and a series of chisels. Additionally, the physical space required for writing was also minimal and Jon was already provided with hard-surfaced desks in his classrooms as part of a physical environment that was conducive toward this mode.

Writing also enabled Jon to directly assert who he was using signs that were similar and dissimilar to one another in varying and nuanced degrees, such as when he described himself in writing using the words *Native*, *Native American*, *Paiute*, *Indian*, *Navajo*, *native dancer*, *grass dancer*, *native to America*, *full blooded American*, and *half Paiute and half Navajo*. When understood within larger systems of differences, each phrase not only enabled Jon to assert who he was, but it simultaneously enabled him to negate other potential identities that had been assigned to him, including an identity as a "White man," for example, or an identity as a Spanish speaker. Jon also directly indicated he was not White when he said that in his ideal land, Buffalo Country, there would be "no white men allowed."

Each of the phrases that Jon used to describe who he was bore traces of varying degrees of opposition to each other and other related words, such as the word *Navajo* as opposed to *Paiute* (describing two nations with a history of conflict), or the phrase *grass dancer* as opposed to *fancy shawl dancer* (one connoting a dance generally held by men compared to a dance generally held by women). Each of Jon's written signs, when understood within a larger system of oppositions and interrelations to other signs within the same mode, allowed Jon to assert who he was and to negate who he did not want to be in complex and nuanced ways. In sum, the affordances of written words stemmed from their ability to refer to related and/or opposing strings of concepts, modes, objects, identities, and processes all in a relatively short period of time, with minimal physical work requiring minimal space, and with readily available material resources in a physical environment conducive to this mode.

In teacher-mandated texts, Jon realized Native identities almost exclusively through written words. In these texts, Jon's intended audience was always a teacher, although sometimes his audience included classmates, friends, or other small groups within classes as well. Given this audience to whom he was communicating, written words fulfilled the *textual* function of language by using a mode with which his audience was familiar and a mode that responded to other chains of texts in the classroom in a coherent and expected way.

Nonetheless, despite this affordance of written words, this mode also constrained Jon's expression of identity. Jon indicated a sense of this constraint when he wrote in his life mission statement that he wanted to speak "*not* in words and writing" (emphasis added). This statement points to a paradox: Jon wrote these words even though he wanted to speak in dance instead. Though written words were a powerful semiotic tool that he used as an act of resistance (even as an act of resistance against writing), and though he used their ideational function to decry a history of assimilation, the use of written words also produced a tension for him because he perceived they had been used as a tool for "Americanizing" Indians. In terms of the interpersonal function of communication, therefore, written words afforded him with opportunities to powerfully express an identity as a Native American, but it also simultaneously constrained the expression of this identity when Jon interpreted this mode in the light of a history of colonialism.

The Affordances and Constraints of Grass Dancing

Dance, in contrast, allowed him to express an identity as a Native American in a language and medium that was not provided by the "White man." As Jon so aptly put it, "Our dances were a sign to keep the idian with in us." In this quote, Jon noted the special ability of dance to fulfill the interpersonal function of communication by affording him an identity that he perceived to be wholly Indian. The historical uses of dance, which was a central component of a "hopeful vision" for Native Americans, shaped its affordances as an esteemed mode of communication for Jon, as indicated by the frequency with which he mentioned the mode and the positive affective orientation he held toward it.

Grass dances, which had been used in part to assert solidarity amongst people with a history of colonization (Ellis, 2003), also allowed Jon to express his identity as a *Native American* in addition to an identity as a Navajo or a Paiute. Jon was learning to speak and write Navajo and Paiute, but both of these languages were historically associated with a particular nation and he had not yet achieved proficiency in either. While he identified himself as a member of both nations, at the same time he also identified himself as being a pantribal Native American. In the powwows Jon attended, people from many different nations participated in the grass dances, displaying elements of shared communication as they danced. The historical uses of grass dancing, therefore, shaped its affordances in allowing Jon

to easily express an identity as a pantribal *Native American* through this mode (cf. Andrews & Olney, 2007; Mattern, 1996).

Grass dancing also held material affordances as well. For instance, it was inextricably connected with other modes of communication that Jon associated with being Native. By definition, a central component of grass dancing is the music to which the dancer's feet must keep beat. As Jon explained, "without the drum there is no pow wow." As Jon danced in his school settings, he also wore traditional regalia that he and his family had made, including beadwork. Unlike written words, which were often used as relatively stand-alone modes of communication, dancing was overtly multimodal. Moreover, the material nature of grass dancing was such that it involved movement of the entire body in a way that was easily visible to others. Jon wrote of the wholly embodied nature of dancing, which combined both music and movement: "The beat gets into every ones body like poison from a snake. But in a good way . . . The beat has to move with your feet. Beat by beat your feet must hit the ground." The concept of *getting into your body* was reiterated several times when the drums were described as the heartbeat of the dance. The repeated movement of the self, coupled with the feeling of the drum inside of the body, afforded Jon with a materialization of being Native American that he experienced under his skin.

Despite Jon's strong affinity for this mode, it constrained Jon as he tried to fulfill the textual function within his school setting by communicating in a way that was coherent with the expectations of his teachers and the setting at hand. Under the recognition that those around him would not understand signs produced as part of grass dancing, Jon tried to teach his teachers and peers what dance meant. For instance, without being asked to do so, Jon gave the first author a sheet of questions that she should use as writing prompts so the whole class could discuss their answers to these questions. Underneath the first question, "What do you think dance means?," Jon wrote descriptions of different Native dances such as the following: "Meaning: *grass dancer*: they danced to stomp down the tall buffalo grass. *Boy traditional*: they tell a story. About hunting, tracking, stalking, or war. . . girls *Jingle*: they beleaved that the dance had secret healing powers." He also asked if he could show and explain videos of grass dancers to several classes, clarifying some of the symbolism of the movements.

Because grass dancing did not serve as a fully articulated mode to Jon's peers and teachers who did not understand its meaning, Jon used spoken or written language to serve as a mode of translation. Given the specific school context in which Jon was communicating, grass dancing (when used by itself) constrained Jon in fulfilling the textual function whereby modes become texts as they are related to their contexts in use (Halliday, 1978). To be sure, grass dancing serves an ideational function by referring to specific concepts and events in the world. However, Jon's teachers and schoolmates were not familiar with this mode, and

consequently, for them, grass dancing did not entirely fulfill the same ideational function as it did for Jon.

Contradictions in Texts

We turn to our third research question: *What contradictions, if any, were present in the texts through which Jon had realized Native identities, and how did Jon address these contradictions?* As a site of identity construction, Jon's school was characterized by potential contradictions as Jon expressed identities and addressed the identities that were assigned to him. On one hand, school provided Jon with multiple opportunities to realize Native identities in his classes, especially through writing. On the other hand, school also potentially limited aspects of the expression of Native identities through proscribing the acceptable modes in which Jon could assert that he was Native American. People's perceptions of Jon were fraught with contradictions as well. Jon's classmates responded with enthusiasm when Jon asserted he was a Native American: They responded to videos of grass dancing with "That's cool!;" they said that Jon was the only one in the class who was not a recent immigrant to America and therefore was the only full-blooded American in the class (as opposed to those with European ancestry); they applauded loudly for him as he grass danced in front of the school for a talent show assembly; and according to his teachers, they supported and liked him. However, according to official school records, Jon was "Caucasian" just as his father was, although some faculty believed he was Latino because of his physical appearance.

Jon navigated his way through this environment of potential contradictions by unswervingly contending that who he was and who he wanted to be was Native. From the first assignment in his English class, in which he wrote that he wanted to be introduced to the class as "I'm a native american And part Navajo and Paiute. I'm turning 14 august 31st. I'm a grass dancer in the powwows"—to his last assignment in his reading class, which was an image and autobiographical narrative describing a teenage grass dancer stepping out into a dancing arena—Jon maintained that he was proud to be a Native American in numerous assignments and self-initiated texts. In his "I Am" poem, for instance, Jon wrote: "I am Native American, a part of the Navajo and Paiute Tribe/I am Native Dancer, A Grassdancer/. . . *I am a different color than some of my relatives/I am an Eagle when I dance./I am who I want to be." Similarly, when he wrote of his ideal future self, he envisioned being with his family "gathered at a pow wow in [name of location] . . . We would always hunt Buffalo the old school way using home made bows and arrows. I could make them with my mad wood making skills." In these and other examples, Jon indicated that he perceived himself as being wholly Native, Navajo, and/or Paiute, and that he wanted others to see him as such.

However, although Jon wanted to be perceived by himself and others as Native, he faced tensions and contradictions in his ability to do so. Under Saussurean

(1916/1986) theories of communication, every sign implies the concurrent presence of opposing signs because its value is derived in part from its contrast with these signs. Every sign in which Jon asserted that he was Native American, therefore, invoked other possible identities he was refuting, such as other terms people used to describe him at school (e.g., *Caucasian*) or such as the "English" ancestry he had inherited from his father. This tension in Jon's ability to assert a wholly Native identity, free from the influence of undesired identities, was exacerbated by the fact that Jon considered writing to be a tool of the colonizers, albeit one he used frequently. In sum, *who* Jon wanted to be was Native, Navajo, and Paiute; and *how* he could construct and express that identity to himself and to others was a point of concern for him, one that he did not resolve through written words alone.

Our understanding of the data suggests that Jon addressed these contradictions associated with asserting Native identities in at least three ways: (a) by using the highly articulated ideational function of written words to point out possible ironies associated with expressing Native identities in writing in English; (b) by using the ideational function of written words to refer to other modes and to other contexts for communication; and (c) by using writing in conjunction with other modes.

Writing—a comprehensible, expected, and readily available mode in Jon's school—was a primary means of communication through which Jon realized Native identities in both student-initiated and teacher-mandated texts. Jon responded to the paradoxes associated with this mode by using the ideational function of writing to draw attention to these paradoxes. For example, he explicitly contrasted the word *dance* to the related and opposing word *writing*, and he wrote that he preferred to speak using the former. In writing, therefore, words could not only signify contrasting and complementary identities, but words could also signify contrasting and complementary forms of representation as they were used in identity construction. Moreover, by noting that he wanted to speak with dance and not in words and writing, by noting that boarding schools attempted to supplant Native oral languages with written and spoken English, and by noting how the U. S. federal government used written treaties to usurp lands owned by indigenous nations, he provided a commentary on connotations he associated with writing. From his vantage point, the mode had historically been bound up in issues of race, culture, colonization, and suppressive educational institutions. At the same time, he used this mode to draw attention to these issues and to decry the historical uses of this mode.

Along with using written words to critique written words, he also used written words to refer his readers to other modes and to other contexts. Jon's written CD labels and website addresses referred his classes to other modes such as music and images. In the flyers Jon made to announce powwows, Jon referred his readers to other contexts outside of school as well, such as dancing arenas. In these contexts, unlike in school, grass dancing in part fulfilled the textual function of

communication by being coherent with the dances preceding and following them, with the announcer's comments, with the physical arrangement of drums and seats that gave dancing a central position, with the other people wearing regalia, and more. Jon therefore not only referred his student body to other modes, but he also invited them to participate in the contexts wherein these modes made the most sense and fit the most seamlessly.

Although Jon used writing as a key means to assert Native identities and to refer to other modes, his sense of uneasiness with this mode precluded it from being his sole vehicle for communication. To offset some of the tensions and contradictions associated with using this mode, he used it in conjunction with other modes as well. In settings away from school, Jon expressed his growing affiliation with Native nations through participating in powwows and grass dancing competitions more often, which he began to win with regularity. He spent more time with his grandmother on designing and crafting dancing regalia and on cooking Native foods. He designed a MySpace page with a Native American name and with links to YouTube videos of powwows.

Within school, his opportunities to use multiple modes to realize Native identities, especially in teacher-mandated assignments, were comparatively limited. Nonetheless, he sought self-initiated ways to bring multiple types of texts into his school setting to express that he was Native. In school, he used graphing paper to construct geometric designs for head roaches he planned to bead with his grandmother; he requested to dance in two assemblies in school wearing full regalia; he played Native music for his peers in his classes; he showed photographs of grass dancers and bison; he created images of buffalo skulls and grass dancers; he presented videos of dances at powwows; and more. Written words and spoken words explained and pointed toward with these nonlinguistic texts, forming an interrelated chain of texts in which he had realized identities. Though writing was the most common mode through which Jon asserted Native identities, it worked in tandem with other modes—to a greater extent in student-initiated texts than in teacher-mandated texts—as Jon asserted valued identities to an audience of friends, teachers, and the student body at large.

Conclusion

Toward More Responsive Classroom Practices

Written words alone—although they were easy to use, enabled nuanced expressions of identity and resistance, and provided Jon with a means of communication with those around him—simultaneously constrained Jon as he sought to assert Native identities. His ambivalence toward writing, suggested by expressions of both affinity and aversion toward it, indicate the tension he experienced between its affordances and constraints. Despite Jon's comparatively unmitigated affinity

for grass dancing, this mode also constrained him, in part by conveying concepts that were not understood by his peers without a direct explanation of them via written and spoken words.

As we consider how Jon's school may have encouraged or limited the expression of Native identities, we begin with the assertion that the teacher-mandated assignments in many of his classes relied primarily on written language. Jon used these assignments as a vehicle through which he asserted Native identities, and in this sense, school was a site that provided him with many built-in opportunities to affirm who he was as a Native. Jon, as an active and adept communicator, brought grass dancing, beading, tribal music, and other modes into school of his own initiative. Because his teachers and the administration allowed and sometimes encouraged Jon to bring these other modes to individual classrooms and to the student body, we also believe that his school was conducive to the expression of Native identities in this regard as well.

Nonetheless, Jon's school may have sought ways to be more conducive to the expression and construction of Native identities. This study indicates that identity realization can be bound with issues of representation: In other words, *how* Jon expressed who he was and who he wanted to be mattered just as *what* he expressed mattered. In this regard, the first author views her educational practices as being potentially limiting in the sense that she relied almost exclusively on print-based assignments. More responsive curricula may have regularly allowed for multiple forms of representation and for explicit discussions on how forms of representation can both afford and constrain expression.

Other researchers (e.g., Demmert, Grissmer, & Towner, 2006), too, have asserted that curricula that is primarily reliant on written English may not be sufficient to combat or reverse a history of assimilationist educational practices. Instead, incorporating Native oral languages (Hermes, 2007; Johnson & Legatz, 2006) or other modes such as basket-weaving (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007) may be a more supportive approach to maintaining Native identities in schools. This study encourages researchers and teachers to also consider multimodal ways that Native identities can be maintained in school settings, in full partnership and with a commitment to learning from individual Native students, their families, and their communities, all of whom experience and express Native identities in different ways.

We believe that the implications from this study can extend to teachers who do not teach Native American students as well: Specifically, all texts may serve as realizations of identities. Written words, often the prevailing and preferred mode in many school subjects (Kress, 2003), limit and constrain their users just as they empower and afford them. Under this theory of communication, we call for classrooms that acknowledge the legitimacy of multiple modes (e.g., Alvermann & Wilson, 2007) as a way to provide spaces wherein students can more fully express desired identities.

Toward Expanded Theories of Multimodality

This study expands current theories of affordances of isolated modes by considering how multiple texts and modes are used in conjunction with each other, rather than in isolation. Jon realized Native identities through related multimodal texts that often referred to one another: A wristband indicated grass dances he had participated in over the weekend; an image of a geometric design on graphing paper served as drafts of head-roaches he later beaded; flyers invited people to attend dances at powwows; written recipes pointed toward traditional Native foods he made with his grandmother; and a hand-chiseled drum mallet (made in woods class) with an attached feather signified the presence of drums in powwows, to name a few. Jon's case challenges or extends the idea that affordances can be theorized in relation to individual modes: It indicates that affordances and constraints can be theorized by considering how multiple modes are used in conjunction with and in opposition to one another while each text fulfills the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions of communication in specific social and physical contexts.

Dance, for example, afforded Jon with a mode designed "to keep the idian within" but its ability to keep the Indian within him was explained through spoken and written words to his audiences at school. Written words afforded Jon with a mode that met the expectations of his school environment and that was comprehensible to himself and others, but he used it to point toward modes and contexts that were not historically used as tools of colonialism. In our view, Jon's strengths as a communicator did not stem from an ability to use isolated modes to express identities; instead, we consider Jon to be an adept and complex communicator in part because he was able to combine and use modes whose affordances offset and complemented other modes' affordances and constraints in an interreferential process of identity construction and negation across numerous texts.

In our study, we primarily studied two modes, written words and grass dancing, in regards to how one student used them to assert Native identities in school in conjunction with and in opposition to one another. In an effort to work toward schools that are more responsive to who students are and who they want to be, we call for more research on how school contexts might enable or constrain other students' identity construction in and through texts, including research on how students use the representations required of them in school settings.

NOTE

1. In order to preserve the integrity of the data, we did not change any of Jon's original spellings, punctuation marks, or capitalization. We also grounded our terminology, such as Native, nation, and Navajo, in the terms most commonly used by Jon.

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2011 David H. Russell Award Call for Nominations

The National Council of Teachers of English is now accepting nominations for the David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English. This award recognizes published research in language, literature, rhetoric, teaching procedures, or cognitive processes that may sharpen the teaching or the content of English at any level. Nominations of publications to be considered should be postmarked no later than **March 1, 2011**. Any work or works of scholarship or research in language, literature, rhetoric, or pedagogy and learning published during the past five years (i.e., between January 2006 and December 2010) are eligible. Works nominated for the David H. Russell Award should be exemplary instances of the genre, address broad research questions, contain material that is accessibly reported, and reflect a project that stands the test of time. Normally, anthologies are not considered. Reports of doctoral studies, while not precluded from consideration for the Russell Award, are typically considered as part of NCTE's separate "Promising Researcher" program. Works nominated for the award must be available in the English language.

To nominate a study for consideration, please email the following information to college@ncte.org: your name, your phone, your email address; author, title, publisher, and date of publication for the work nominated; and one paragraph indicating your reasons for nominating the work. Please include four copies of the publication for distribution to the Selection Committee, or give full bibliographic information so that the Selection Committee will encounter no difficulty in locating the publication you nominate. **Send nominations and materials by March 1, 2011, to** David H. Russell Award, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096, Attn: Felisa Mann. Final selections will be announced in mid-August 2011.